Armco Probers Want Kleindienst Testimony

Post 12/5/72

United Press International

A congressional subcommittee wants Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst and White House aide Peter Flanigan to testify next week on the White House role in an anti-pollution court case against Armco Steel Co.

Rep. Henry S. Reuss (D-Wis.), chairman of the House Government Operations Subcommittee, charged earlier that the White House interceded to win modification of a federal court order that Armco stop dumping toxic matter into the Houston ship channel.

A former assistant attorney general, Shiro Kashiwa, now a judge on the U.S. Court of Claims, has testified that the White House did not ask him to seek modification of the court order. But Reuss said a memorandum was later obtained showing that Kashiwa instructed one of his assistants to discuss the case with two Flanigan aides.

Kashiwa was contacted by the White House, Reuss said, after William C. Verity, president of Armco, wrote to President Nixon protesting that the court order would endanger the firms operations.

Shortly afterward, the Justice Department asked the court to reduce its original order and permit limited dumping, Reuss said.

"Both the integrity of the judicial process and the fight against environmental pollution will be impaired if political influence is used to modify court decrees ordering polluters to stop discharging toxic wastes," Reuss said in announcing the start of his subcommittee's hearings next Thursday.